

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2016*

**Memorandum on Withdrawal of Certain Portions of the United States Arctic Outer Continental Shelf From Mineral Leasing**

*December 20, 2016*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of the Interior*

*Subject:* Withdrawal of Certain Portions of the United States Arctic Outer Continental Shelf from Mineral Leasing

Consistent with principles of responsible public stewardship entrusted to this office, with due consideration of (1) the important, irreplaceable values of the Chukchi Sea and portions of the Beaufort Sea for marine mammals, other wildlife, wildlife habitat, scientific research, and Alaska Native subsistence use; (2) the vulnerability of these ecosystems to an oil spill; and (3) the unique logistical, operational, safety, and scientific challenges and risks of oil extraction and spill response in these Arctic waters, as described in the report of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee Task Force on oil spill response, chaired by the U.S. Coast Guard, I hereby direct as follows:

Under the authority granted to me in section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1341(a), I hereby withdraw from disposition by leasing for a time period without specific expiration the following areas of the Outer Continental Shelf: (1) the area designated by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management as the Chukchi Sea Planning Area that is not currently withdrawn; and (2) the area designated by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management as the Beaufort Sea Planning Area that is not currently withdrawn except for those Outer Continental Shelf nearshore lease blocks identified in the attached table. The boundaries of the withdrawn areas are more specifically delineated in the attached map, excepting only the Outer Continental Shelf lease blocks in the Beaufort Sea Planning Area listed as "not withdrawn" in the accompanying table. Both the map and table form a part of this memorandum, with the lease blocks in the table governing the boundaries of the area not included in the withdrawal of the Beaufort Sea Planning Area. The withdrawal directed by this memorandum prevents consideration of withdrawn areas for any mineral leasing for purposes of exploration, development, or production.

Nothing in this withdrawal affects rights under existing leases in the withdrawn areas.

BARACK OBAMA

*Categories:* Communications to Federal Agencies : U.S. Arctic Outer Continental Shelf, mineral leasing, memorandum on withdrawal.

*Subjects:* Arctic : Conservation efforts; Energy : Offshore oil and gas drilling; U.S. Outer Continental Shelf, Arctic and Atlantic Oceans, withdrawal from mineral leasing.

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